



# A heart attack can be a heart beat away

John woke up at the usual time and as he glanced outside, there was 4 inches of fresh snow. Thinking about the safety of the walk and driveway, he had his morning coffee, dressed and headed outside to shovel the snow.

It was only a few minutes into the project when he felt a twinge of pain in his jaw. He thought little of it, and continued to work. The pain in his jaw began to move down into his chest, and across to his left arm. He started to move into the house and found himself out of breath. For the first time in his life he literally was scared, he felt he was dying, and he was.

John's story is not a new one, nor is it confined to just him, or males or specific ages. John is only 39 and in good health, or so he thought.

A heart attack can claim anyone: someone who is overweight, smokes, has high blood pressure, stressed or

genetically predisposed (through family history, diabetes or other risk factors) is at higher risk. But this can affect anyone. In the most basic terms, the heart, a muscle that pumps blood throughout your body, demands oxygen like all the other organs and muscles. However, when deprived it becomes stressed and will send signals in the form of pain. Deprived long enough portions of the heart, small sections of the muscle will begin to die. The stress caused by this is a heart attack. A heart attack may present from pain and discomfort through cardiac death and arrest (the heart stops beating).

Preventing a heart attack is the first step in survival. Reducing stress, reducing the cholesterol in our bodies, quit smoking, and know-

ing that our bodies are frail to begin with, we keep our systems strong through exercise and diet. If you have a history of medical issues, consult your physician and stay on top of those risks through diet and medication. After the age of 45, you should get a stress test done to evaluate the condition of your heart. Blood work can show areas of concern as well, such as high cholesterol. Remember this, High Blood Pressure is the most significant threat when it comes to heart attacks.

The next step is to understand the signs and symptoms of a pending heart attack.



In case of a heart attack, early intervention is not only the most crucial factor in survival, but it also contributes to quality of life following the injury. Time is not an ally.

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## A heart attack can be a heart beat away (continued from page 1)

Basically, there are usually warning signs. Those can include any of the following: shortness of breath after minor exertion, inability to catch your breath even while resting, chest pain (described as minor as indigestion all the way to an elephant sitting on my chest), pain in the neck, jaw or arm, usually on the left side, and often cold sweats, nausea or vomiting, lightheadedness, anxiety, indigestion, and unexplained fatigue.

Knowing what to do if you or someone around you is suffering from these symptoms is the best hope for surviving a heart attack. The first, most important thing is to get help: Call 9-1-1 or the emergency number in your area and access EMS.

Rest, as best as possible: find a position of comfort and relax as much as you can. You may swallow or chew an aspirin tablet (1 and only 1!) as long as your doctor has not told you not to, or you are not allergic. Taking an aspirin will help open the narrowing arteries and aid in blood supply to the tissue in distress. Remaining calm until help arrives reduces the stress in your body. Many people will think they can drive themselves to a hospital, but the truth is, if an EMS service operates in your area, they have the tools to aid in diagnosis and reduce the damage being done to the system.

In the event of cardiac arrest, a person will appear to be unconscious

and not breathing. Activating EMS, providing chest compressions and an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) are the critical steps to saving lives. For best results, take a CPR Class through your unit. Contact your unit's training and readiness personnel. There are too many avenues to receive this training to ignore. And this training is proven to save lives. For further information, contact the State Safety Office.



## Winter conditions pose significant threats for injuries

Snow and ice covered sidewalks and driveways seem to count for many of the slips and falls that people suffer every year. Vehicle accidents go up exponentially each year at this time. Yet as natives of the state and veterans of significant weather issues, many of us forget that the frosty conditions are dangerous.

It is actually an amazing fact that during the first snow or frost, most of the accidents that occur involve and are caused by people who have been through this before.

As we enter the winter months, all personnel need to take the couple extra minutes every time to do things the right way, the safe way.

Leave a couple minutes earlier than usual so as to not rush to work, take your time driving home. Driving slower in wet and slick conditions has proven to be quicker to reach a destination than having an accident along the way.

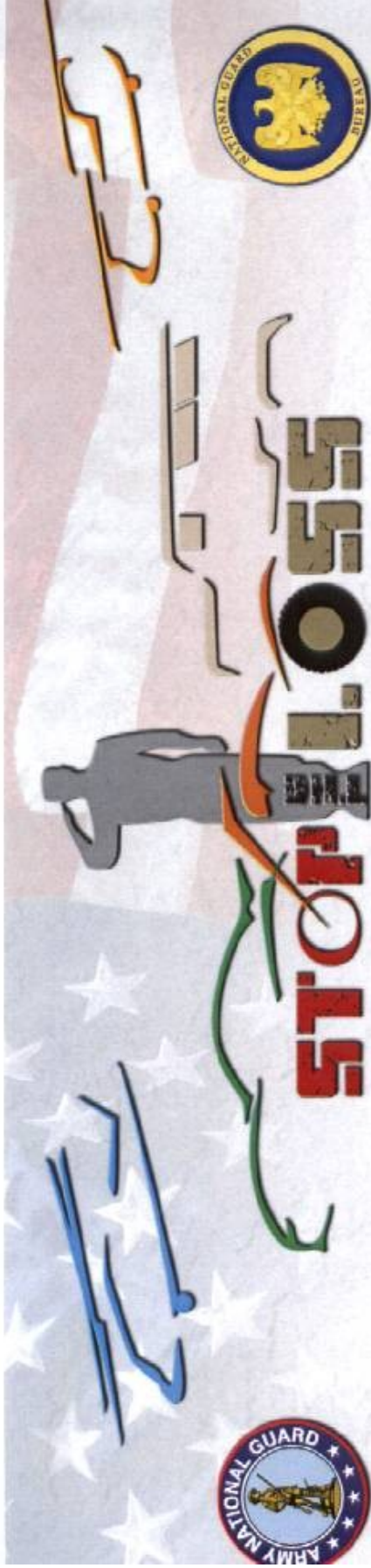
When walking on icy or snow covered surfaces, take shorter steps and use ice cleats if needed. At work or at home, using a commercial product like Ice Melt or sand will provide traction for footing, but don't take that for granted. Use caution all winter long. If it's cold enough to freeze, chances are there is going to be ice along your route.

*At work or at home, ice and snow present lots of challenges for surviving the winter without an accident.*

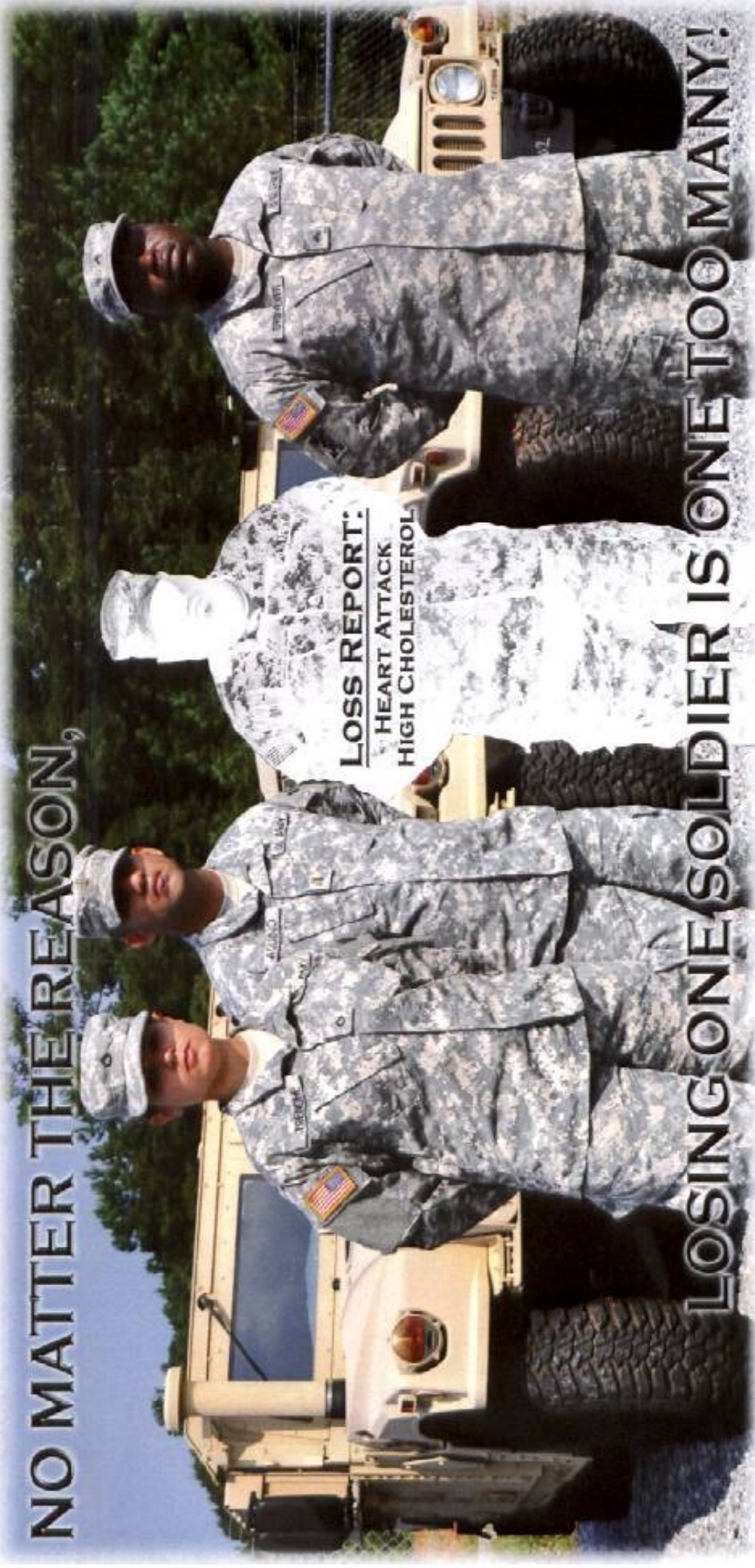
**Congratulations to SFC Ryan Williamson, SSG Colleen, SSG Mike Strang, SSG Tamara Sime and SGT Kelley Wolfe on being the first five personnel to respond to last months Safety Sense Challenge. Watch for future challenges or answer specific questions for your chance to win.**







NO MATTER THE REASON,



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